



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

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LC 71-0441  
June 7, 1971

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: Senator J. William Fulbright, Chairman,  
Senate Foreign Relations Committee  
Mr. Carl Marcy, Chief of Staff, SFRC,  
Mr. Norvill Jones, SFRC Staff  
Assistant Secretary David M. Abshire (H)  
Deputy Assistant Secretary Harrison M.  
Symmes (H)

Subject: Matters of Interest to Senate Foreign  
Relations Committee

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(This call on Chairman Fulbright had been arranged with his office a day earlier. Mr. Henderson of the SFRC staff had been informed that the call was being made and that Mr. Abshire would probably refer to the subjects actually raised.)

Mr. Abshire alluded to the Chairman's forthcoming trip and said he wanted to touch base with him on some items of business before he left. The first item was the Middle East. In response to Mr. Abshire's request for any advice he might have, the Senator said he thought the Administration was doing everything it properly could and he strongly supported the Secretary. It seemed to him the big obstacle was getting the Israelis to see that they had a real opportunity to achieve a peaceful settlement if they would only be more flexible. He hoped that

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the Administration would persist in its present policies and that the Israelis could be persuaded to see that their best interests would be served by those policies. He would be happy to help us in any way we thought he could.

Mr. Abshire next mentioned the forthcoming Okinawa Reversion Agreement as a major issue on the horizon and noted that after talking to Senator Robert Byrd we had been taking informal soundings of Senatorial attitudes. We wanted to avoid submitting the agreement for ratification at an inauspicious moment. Our soundings were still incomplete but tended to indicate the agreement might encounter more opposition from Senators on "national security" grounds than because of linkage with Japanese textile and other trade policies. Senator Fulbright commented that he did not believe the agreement would encounter a blocking third. He was certain there would be a lot of talk about Japanese trade policies and so on, but in the end the agreement would obtain the necessary two-thirds. He singled out Senator Thurmond and "other Southerners" for special attention and also suggested it would be well to discuss it with Senator Ribicoff and other Senators with strong trade interests.

Mr. Abshire next raised the Case Bill for an "international communications corporation" to replace CIA funding for Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty. He mentioned that we had dropped the word "private" previously used to describe the proposed new set up as a "private public corporation." We were now coming up against the June 30 deadline for continued funding for the radios, and were hoping some action might be taken on the Case Bill.

Senator Fulbright interrupted to say he was opposed to the bill. He considered it was inconsistent with the Administration's policy of negotiation rather than confrontation. The radios were a hangover from the Cold War

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and were now an anachronism. Whatever needed to be done could be done by VOA and other parts of USIA. Discontinuing RFE and RL would also save money. He himself therefore was opposed to the proposed bill, and he thought other Senators would oppose it on the floor.

Mr. Abshire took up various aspects of the Senator's objections. He emphasized among other things that the radios provide news on developments within the Iron Curtain countries that cannot be provided by VOA, and that information from East Europeans who had settled in the West indicated the radios were an important source of news for many people. The authorization would be for one year. That would give us time to see how it worked.

After considerable discussion, Senator Fulbright said he did not see any area for compromise for himself on the bill. He wondered why the Administration did not go back to Case's original proposal. He went on to say that just that afternoon a group of Senators in connection with the situation in Laos had discussed the need for legislation to restrict CIA activities to intelligence only. He reiterated his strong opposition to the purpose of the radios as being basically inconsistent with professed Administration policy. He considered the radios were a provocation.

Mr. Abshire briefly mentioned the GAO Berlin audit. He said the State Department is not the only agency involved. We were actively trying to see what could be worked out. Senator Fulbright did not dwell on this matter but made remarks about the Congress' right to know how its money is being spent.

As Mr. Abshire was leaving, Senator Fulbright returned briefly to the RFE issue by raising Radio Free Asia which, he complained, was doing similarly bad things on the other side of the world. Mr. Abshire responded that he thought the cases were quite different. The conversation was concluded with a few cordial remarks about Fulbright's trip.

  
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